REMARKS

Claims 1-11 have been amended and remain in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

In accordance with the Examiner's indication, applicants are filing a Petition to the Office requesting the granting of foreign priority to the instant application under 35 USC 119 based on an application 2002-273543, filed in Japan on September 19, 2002.

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Bezos et al., European Patent Application EP 0 927 945, in view of Amazon.

This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to claims 1-11, as amended.

Regarding claim 1, the rejection notes that Bezos teaches "an address data storing unit which stores address data of users that are categorized based on groups in which each of the users belong to, and identification data unique to each of the user" so as "[t]o effect the giving of the item to multiple recipients who are associated with the group name, the user inputs a name of the group that identifies the recipients into the group name subsection 902b"(Paragraph 28, lines 9-13) and "Figure 10 illustrates a grid for creation of a group and the entry of identifying information for recipients with the group (i.e. members)"(Paragraph 28, lines 15-18).

However, Bezos teaches that multiple recipients are associated with the group name of the recipients themselves, not with the orderer. Therefore, in Bezos, the orderer (i.e., the user) must input the name of the group that identifies the recipients (see Bezos, Paragraph 28, lines 9-13). The orderer cannot obtain recipient information unless the orderer specifies and inputs the group name.

In contrast, amended claim 1 defines a combination comprising an address data storing unit which stores destination address data categorized based on the orderer's groups and identification data unique to each of the orderers. The present invention further includes a first specification processing unit which can specify the orderer's group based on a characteristic parameter of the orderer's terminal. The present invention further includes a second specification

processing unit which can specify destination address data to be extracted based on the identification data and the orderer's group. Therefore, in the combination defined by amended claim 1, there is no requirement that the orderer must input the name of the orderer's group. The orderer can obtain destination address data of candidates for a recipient even when the orderer cannot input the group name. A similar combination of elements, including the claimed configuration of the address data storing unit, is neither disclosed nor suggested in Bezos.

According to the rejection, Amazon teaches that "said identification data receiving unit specifies a group to which a user who inputs an order of merchandise belongs, based on a characteristic parameter of said user terminal" as "[v]iew a customer's Wish List or update your own" (see page 1). The rejection notes that it is common knowledge that to view and potentially purchase items on a person's wish list, one must be a member of that wish list. The rejection further notes that a wish list is functionally equivalent to a gift registry system.

However, Amazon also teaches that cookies (corresponding to characteristic parameters of the customer's terminal) are transferred from the customer's terminal to the host even when the customer only wants to view a customer's wish list or the top page of the shopping site. Therefore, Amazon increases data traffic and workload because the characteristic parameters must be frequently transferred from terminals to host.

In contrast, amended claim 1 defines a combination comprising a first specification processing unit that specifies an orderer's group only after the orderer has input an order for merchandise. In other words, the characteristic parameters of the orderer's terminal are not required unless the orderer inputs an order for merchandise. Therefore, in clear contrast to Amazon, the present invention decreases the data traffic and workload. Neither Bezos nor Amazon teach or suggest a combination including a feature corresponding to the first specification processing unit defined by the amended claims.

The rejection further indicates that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of the cited references because the features disclosed in Amazon would allow Bezos to provide a method for allowing members of a group to efficiently purchase gifts for other members of a group.

However, neither Bezos nor Amazon teach or suggest how to specify other members of the group. Neither Bezos nor Amazon teach or suggest a combination including "an address data storing unit which stores destination address data of candidates for a recipient of merchandise." Neither Bezos nor Amazon teach or suggest configuration of destination address data which is "categorized based on orderer's groups and identification data". Therefore, even if Amazon and Bezos are combined as proposed, the combination would not enable members of an orderer's group to efficiently specify a recipient being associated with the orderer's group (as in the present invention).

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692004400.

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